

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,000

This is a search for three individuals.

2

00:00:07,000 --> 00:00:10,000

All three have been missing from their families for over 70 years.

3

00:00:15,000 --> 00:00:17,000

This is kind of a smoking gun.

4

00:00:17,000 --> 00:00:22,000

If this is accurate, then 400 yards out, there should be a lost World War II plane.

5

00:00:24,000 --> 00:00:27,000

These are AUVs, autonomous underwater vehicles.

6

00:00:27,000 --> 00:00:28,000

Okay, let's do it.

7

00:00:29,000 --> 00:00:31,000

We got something, we got structure.

8

00:00:31,000 --> 00:00:32,000

Oh, this is incredible.

9

00:00:32,000 --> 00:00:33,000

Look at that!

10

00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:38,000

Unbelievable, what a thrill.

11

00:00:41,000 --> 00:00:43,000

I got it, I see the wreck.

12

00:00:44,000 --> 00:00:46,000

Absolutely incredible.

13

00:00:53,000 --> 00:00:54,000

No one left behind.

14

00:00:54,000 --> 00:00:59,000

That's the pledge we make to American soldiers willing to sacrifice their lives for our country.

15

00:00:59,000 --> 00:01:05,000

In World War II alone, more than 75,000 servicemen were listed as missing in action.

16

00:01:05,000 --> 00:01:14,000

But not tallied in that number are the more than 18,000 airmen who died in fatal training and aviation accidents.

17

00:01:14,000 --> 00:01:17,000

Most of them right here in the USA.

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00:01:18,000 --> 00:01:26,000

This is the story of three of those young men, the baffling mystery surrounding their disappearance and the effort to bring them home.

19

00:01:28,000 --> 00:01:35,000

February 1945, a squadron of Avenger bombers is on a training mission near California's Channel Islands,

20

00:01:35,000 --> 00:01:42,000

when suddenly two of the planes collide and crash into the Pacific.

21

00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:45,000

One of those planes is never found.

22

00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:54,000

Its three-man crew, pilot Dennis Ruhl and crewman Russell Guzetta and Ernest Williams vanish, never to be seen again.

23

00:01:55,000 --> 00:02:02,000

Now, in a race against time and the elements, a group of scientists and archaeologists called Project Recover

24

00:02:02,000 --> 00:02:11,000

is using the latest deep-sea tech to reconstruct the accident and mount a search to find the lost Avenger in the depths of the Pacific.

25

00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:16,000

My mission is to join them and uncover what happened on that fateful day

26

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:24,000

and to hunt for the final resting place of three servicemen who have waited three-quarters of a century to be brought home.

27

00:02:27,000 --> 00:02:29,000

My name is Josh Gates.

28

00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:30,000

Hello!

29

00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:31,000

Explorer.

30

00:02:32,000 --> 00:02:33,000

Adventurer.

31

00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:34,000

This is sick!

32

00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:38,000

And a guy who ends up in some very strange situations.

33

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:40,000

Whoo! That was exciting!

34

00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:49,000

With a degree in archaeology and a passion for the unexplained, I travel to the ends of the Earth, investigating the greatest legends in history.

35

00:02:49,000 --> 00:02:51,000

Day, let's punch it!

36

00:02:51,000 --> 00:02:53,000

This is Expedition Unknown.

37

00:03:09,000 --> 00:03:14,000

I am driving in an authentic Willie's Jeep.

38

00:03:14,000 --> 00:03:23,000

This iconic four-wheel drive vehicle replaced the military's literal workhorses, the draft animals that were used during World War I.

39

00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:30,000

And it was so popular that Willie's manufactured more than 350,000 of these during World War II.

40

00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:45,000

I am headed toward La Jolla, California, to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and the beginning of an expedition in search of a lost World War II-era plane and a mystery 75 years into making.

41

00:03:48,000 --> 00:03:55,000

Founded in 1903, Scripps is one of the oldest and most important Earth science centers on the planet.

42

00:03:56,000 --> 00:04:01,000

I'm here to meet Scripps Lab Director and Project Recover Co-Founder, Dr. Eric Terrell.

43

00:04:02,000 --> 00:04:03,000

Hey Josh!

44

00:04:03,000 --> 00:04:04,000

Hey, nice to meet you man.

45

00:04:04,000 --> 00:04:05,000

Thanks for coming.

46

00:04:05,000 --> 00:04:06,000

This place is stunning.

47

00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:09,000

Scripps is a global institution, looking at sea level rise.

48

00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:12,000

We are studying ocean waves, the forecasting of the ocean.

49

00:04:12,000 --> 00:04:15,000

So what it has to do with the ocean, Scripps is on it.

50

00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:16,000

We're on it.

51

00:04:16,000 --> 00:04:18,000

And I take it these are some of the tools of the trade here?

52

00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:19,000

Yes, AUVs.

53

00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:21,000

Autonomous underwater vehicle.

54

00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:24,000

We can go out and sample a thousand football fields in one deployment.

55

00:04:24,000 --> 00:04:25,000

Wow.

56

00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:27,000

This is revolutionizing what we do here at Scripps.

57

00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:30,000

Things we never dreamed of a decade ago we're doing now.

58

00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:35,000

These sonar equipped torpedo bots are transforming deep sea exploration,

59

00:04:35,000 --> 00:04:39,000

allowing scientists to map Earth's final frontier, the ocean.

60

00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:43,000

I got to see them in action while searching for Gertrude Tompkins,

61

00:04:43,000 --> 00:04:50,000

another missing World War II pilot whose story inspired me to seek out more of our nation's lost heroes.

62

00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:55,000

And among the many missions that you're associated with is this thing called Project Recover.

63

00:04:55,000 --> 00:04:56,000

Yes.

64

00:04:57,000 --> 00:05:00,000

We've conducted over 50 missions in 20 different countries,

65

00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:04,000

looking explicitly for missing in action associated with past conflicts.

66

00:05:04,000 --> 00:05:05,000

Incredible.

67

00:05:05,000 --> 00:05:11,000

Project Recover scours the globe for American MIAs with one objective, to bring them home.

68

00:05:11,000 --> 00:05:16,000

Their efforts have led to the discovery of more than 30 World War II wrecks

69

00:05:16,000 --> 00:05:21,000

associated with more than 100 missing servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice.

70

00:05:21,000 --> 00:05:24,000

More than a dozen of these individuals have been repatriated,

71

00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:27,000

giving long awaited closure to their families.

72

00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:31,000

Josh, why don't we go upstairs and I'll show you the next mission we're getting ready for.

73

00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:32,000

I would love to. Come on, please.

74

00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:37,000

Eric leads me to the aptly named Viz Room.

75

00:05:39,000 --> 00:05:40,000

Welcome to our operations center.

76

00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:42,000

I mean, this is like mission control.

77

00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:43,000

It is.

78

00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:44,000

You launched the space shuttle from in here.

79

00:05:44,000 --> 00:05:45,000

We can at least track it.

80

00:05:45,000 --> 00:05:46,000

Right. There you go.

81

00:05:46,000 --> 00:05:47,000

This is unbelievable.

82

00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:52,000

So when we talk about American MIAs, how many are still out there?

83

00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:54,000

Josh, the numbers are staggering.

84

00:05:54,000 --> 00:05:58,000

83,000 missing in action since World War II up to their present.

85

00:05:58,000 --> 00:05:59,000

83,000?

86

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:01,000

For instance, let's take a look at this map here, Josh.

87

00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:06,000

We've got maps of cases just in the European Mediterranean Theater.

88

00:06:06,000 --> 00:06:08,000

Each one of these dots represents a case file.

89

00:06:08,000 --> 00:06:10,000

So these are all potential missions?

90

00:06:10,000 --> 00:06:11,000

Yes.

91

00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:14,000

And some of them aren't even on the Defense Department's radar.

92

00:06:14,000 --> 00:06:19,000

The U.S. doesn't recognize people who got lost during training accidents.

93

00:06:19,000 --> 00:06:20,000

They're not counted as MIAs.

94

00:06:20,000 --> 00:06:21,000

They're not counted as MIA.

95

00:06:21,000 --> 00:06:24,000

So if you're in a training accident, you are not listed as missing in action,

96

00:06:24,000 --> 00:06:27,000

even though your body was never found and brought home to your family.

97

00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:29,000

And how many people are we talking about?

98

00:06:29,000 --> 00:06:33,000

Where you have about 18,000 individuals that were lost in training accidents.

99

00:06:33,000 --> 00:06:34,000

Really?

100

00:06:34,000 --> 00:06:38,000

And does that also mean that nobody's looking for those people?

101

00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:42,000

It's currently not on the search list for the U.S. government.

102

00:06:42,000 --> 00:06:45,000

And in fact, a lot of these cases in our own backyard.

103

00:06:45,000 --> 00:06:48,000

So as we spin the globe here, we're going to bring you into Southern California.

104

00:06:48,000 --> 00:06:54,000

Yellow dots here represent training accidents that our team's been able to uncover for the last year.

105

00:06:54,000 --> 00:06:58,000

Project Recovers' next mission, and one of its most mysterious, is here,

106

00:06:58,000 --> 00:07:00,000

off of California's Anacapa Island.

107

00:07:00,000 --> 00:07:06,000

These two targets here represent a mid-air collision between two torpedo bombers.

108

00:07:07,000 --> 00:07:16,000

On the morning of February 22, 1945, a squadron of Avengers took off from the naval air station in Oxnard, California.

109

00:07:16,000 --> 00:07:19,000

Each plane had a three-man crew on board.

110

00:07:19,000 --> 00:07:24,000

Flying over Anacapa Island, they were practicing torpedo runs critical to the war effort,

111

00:07:24,000 --> 00:07:27,000

when two of the planes collided.

112

00:07:28,000 --> 00:07:37,000

According to a report by the commanding officer, pilot Dennis P. Ruhl's plane ducked suddenly,

113

00:07:37,000 --> 00:07:42,000

and then flew right up into the aircraft of pilot John Buckley.

114

00:07:42,000 --> 00:07:46,000

Ruhl's plane went down south of the island, and Buckley's plane crashed to the north,

115

00:07:46,000 --> 00:07:49,000

where he and another crew member survived.

116

00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:51,000

That wreckage has now been located.

117

00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:56,000

The second plane on the southern side of the island, it's never been found.

118

00:07:56,000 --> 00:07:58,000

Josh, this is a search for three individuals.

119

00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:02,000

We've got the pilot Dennis Ruhl, we've got the bomber Ernest Williams,

120

00:08:02,000 --> 00:08:04,000

and we've got the radio men Russ Guzetta.

121

00:08:04,000 --> 00:08:07,000

All three have been missing from their families for over 70 years.

122

00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:12,000

Dennis Ruhl's family received the following message from the commander of his unit.

123

00:08:12,000 --> 00:08:18,000

I realize how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to comfort you.

124

00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:23,000

Exhaustive searches were initiated, but no report of his recovery was made.

125

00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:28,000

A month after the accident, Russell Guzetta's bereaved parents contacted their local paper,

126

00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:31,000

noting that no details of the crash were released.

127

00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:36,000

A desperate appeal for more information on the fate of their missing son.

128

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:43,000

Now, 75 years later, project recover hopes to answer that plea.

129

00:08:43,000 --> 00:08:48,000

If they collided in midair, one would think, well, it must be close to the plane that's been recovered, right?

130

00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:51,000

You would think big airplane, bigger ocean.

131

00:08:51,000 --> 00:08:53,000

Look how long it took to find that Titanic.

132

00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:55,000

We still haven't found Malaysian air.

133

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:59,000

And to be honest, nobody's been really charged with that mission to go after these training losses.

134

00:08:59,000 --> 00:09:01,000

So the question is, how do you find it?

135

00:09:01,000 --> 00:09:05,000

So the way we're going to find this is using not only all that high-tech equipment that I showed you downstairs,

136

00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:10,000

but we really got to do due diligence in all the historical documents to really set up our search areas.

137

00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:12,000

To understand the crash itself.

138

00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:18,000

Exactly. Before we can undertake our mission, we have to really understand in all detail their mission on that fateful day.

139

00:09:19,000 --> 00:09:26,000

In order to solve the mystery of the missing Avenger, I need to get in front of one and decipher the accident itself.

140

00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:34,000

Luckily, there happens to be an Avenger just 20 minutes down the coast on the deck of the USS

Midway.

141

00:09:34,000 --> 00:09:41,000

Commissioned in 1945, this 1,000-foot-long airport on the ocean served until 1992,

142

00:09:41,000 --> 00:09:47,000

offering critical support during the Vietnam War and as the flagship in Operation Desert Storm.

143

00:09:47,000 --> 00:09:52,000

Now, like a lot of 76-year-olds, she's retired to sunny San Diego.

144

00:09:52,000 --> 00:09:57,000

I head down the flight deck to meet historian and naval veteran Carl Zingheim.

145

00:09:57,000 --> 00:09:58,000

Carl.

146

00:09:58,000 --> 00:09:59,000

Hey.

147

00:09:59,000 --> 00:10:00,000

Hey, Josh.

148

00:10:00,000 --> 00:10:01,000

How are you, man?

149

00:10:01,000 --> 00:10:02,000

Welcome aboard.

150

00:10:02,000 --> 00:10:04,000

Hey, thank you. Happy to be here. And look at this, the Avenger.

151

00:10:10,000 --> 00:10:13,000

You know, my first reaction to being up close to it is how big it is.

152

00:10:13,000 --> 00:10:15,000

I think the photos don't really do it justice.

153

00:10:15,000 --> 00:10:21,000

This is the largest single-engine aircraft to routinely operate in World War II at squadron strength.

154

00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:22,000

Why so big?

155

00:10:22,000 --> 00:10:31,000

You needed a big engine to do a big job, and quite literally, they start with a large R-2600 engine and built the rest of the airplane around it.

156

00:10:31,000 --> 00:10:33,000

Right. And that big job, I assume, is dropping these.

157

00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:37,000

That's a 2,000-pound torpedo, a delicate instrument in its own right.

158

00:10:37,000 --> 00:10:39,000

And it is live, right? This is leftover.

159

00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:41,000

It better not be.

160

00:10:41,000 --> 00:10:46,000

So, okay, I get it. You need a lot of power, and it looks like a pretty big wingspan to pull that off.

161

00:10:46,000 --> 00:10:50,000

How important was this plane to the U.S. in World War II?

162

00:10:50,000 --> 00:11:01,000

Critically important. This was a huge step up for naval aviation at the time, because now you finally had a torpedo plane that could keep up with the other aircraft so you could have a combined strike.

163

00:11:01,000 --> 00:11:05,000

Previous torpedo plane was just too slow, and you had disjointed attacks.

164

00:11:05,000 --> 00:11:14,000

With a top speed of about 275 miles per hour, the powerful Avenger lived up to its name, raining fire and fury on Japan's Navy.

165

00:11:14,000 --> 00:11:22,000

They sank the super battleships Yamato and Musashi, as well as 30 submarines to help win the war in

the Pacific.

166

00:11:22,000 --> 00:11:28,000

But the torpedo bomber's most innovative feature was its signature Stow Wing.

167

00:11:28,000 --> 00:11:30,000

How cool is that?

168

00:11:30,000 --> 00:11:31,000

Awesome, isn't it?

169

00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:32,000

Oh, my word.

170

00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:33,000

Look at that.

171

00:11:33,000 --> 00:11:35,000

That's so badass.

172

00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:40,000

Probably one of the cleverest ways of putting an aircraft away on a carrier deck.

173

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:50,000

For deployment on aircraft carriers, including this one, it cuts the plane's 54-foot wingspan in half when they move it below deck.

174

00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:53,000

Let's talk about this incident out at Anacapa, right?

175

00:11:53,000 --> 00:11:56,000

I'm trying to understand this. We know there was a mid-air collision out there.

176

00:11:56,000 --> 00:12:01,000

Do you suspect that that might be because of how the aircraft flies or because of what they were trying to do with it?

177

00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:03,000

It's a very forgiving aircraft to fly.

178

00:12:03,000 --> 00:12:10,000

It's got such a large wing area, you don't have much to worry about in terms of instability or losing control of the aircraft.

179

00:12:10,000 --> 00:12:14,000

It probably was down to what they were attempting to practice.

180

00:12:14,000 --> 00:12:20,000

The dropping a torpedo under combat conditions is the most demanding attack in all of naval aviation.

181

00:12:23,000 --> 00:12:30,000

Even in a big, stable bomber like the Avenger, delivering a torpedo on target took some serious skill.

182

00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:36,000

The torpedo is still the most potent single weapon of destruction against enemy shipping, but only if used properly.

183

00:12:39,000 --> 00:12:48,000

And according to reports from the Anacapa Island crash, pilots Ruhl and Buckley were perfecting a complicated new attack called an Anvil Maneuver.

184

00:12:49,000 --> 00:12:56,000

Squadrons of bombers would approach a ship from both sides so that whichever way the ship turned, it faced a torpedo strike.

185

00:12:56,000 --> 00:12:59,000

So the planes are flying kind of toward each other?

186

00:12:59,000 --> 00:13:01,000

Essentially.

187

00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:08,000

It does seem like understanding that maneuver is the key to figuring out both the collision and where these planes crashed.

188

00:13:08,000 --> 00:13:13,000

We could speculate all day about what happened, but to really understand it, you have to fly in one.

189

00:13:13,000 --> 00:13:18,000

Which I assume is impossible. I don't think this thing's lifting off the deck anytime soon. How many of these are even left?

190

00:13:18,000 --> 00:13:22,000

Maybe a handful, but one of those is nearby.

191

00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:23,000

That flies?

192

00:13:23,000 --> 00:13:24,000

That flies.

193

00:13:25,000 --> 00:13:30,000

What's it like to be a new pilot flying an 80-year-old Avenger? I'm about to find out.

194

00:13:31,000 --> 00:13:36,000

I meet pilot John Maloney on the wing as he makes final preparations for takeoff.

195

00:13:36,000 --> 00:13:37,000

How you doing?

196

00:13:37,000 --> 00:13:38,000

Good, how you doing?

197

00:13:38,000 --> 00:13:39,000

I'm Josh.

198

00:13:39,000 --> 00:13:40,000

John, how you doing?

199

00:13:40,000 --> 00:13:41,000

Great to meet you. You want a fly or am I flying?

200

00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:42,000

No, it's probably better.

201

00:13:42,000 --> 00:13:43,000

Probably best if you fly, John.

202

00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:44,000

Alright.

203

00:13:44,000 --> 00:13:45,000

I'll be back here, yeah?

204

00:13:45,000 --> 00:13:46,000

Yeah.

205

00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:48,000

Like a glove.

206

00:13:48,000 --> 00:13:55,000

I squeeze into the navigator's seat, thankful that I'm not in the even more claustrophobic tailgunner position.

207

00:14:01,000 --> 00:14:03,000

Whoa, look at this!

208

00:14:13,000 --> 00:14:14,000

It's rock and roll.

209

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:19,000

This historic aircraft is about to fly its first mission in decades.

210

00:14:19,000 --> 00:14:20,000

Our directive?

211

00:14:20,000 --> 00:14:23,000

To reconstruct the accident, to learn how it happened,

212

00:14:23,000 --> 00:14:27,000

and solve the mystery of where the lost Avenger lies.

213

00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:34,000

Unbelievable! This is sick!

214

00:14:35,000 --> 00:14:36,000

Ah!

215

00:14:39,000 --> 00:14:46,000

In 1945, two Avenger torpedo bombers collided off the coast of California's Anacapa Island.

216

00:14:46,000 --> 00:14:50,000

One of them, and its three-man crew, is still missing.

217

00:14:51,000 --> 00:14:57,000

Now, I'm flying in an identical plane to investigate the crash and find the lost Avenger.

218

00:15:00,000 --> 00:15:02,000

This thing gets up near fast.

219

00:15:03,000 --> 00:15:05,000

Yeah, I thought it was about that six-wheels wing.

220

00:15:05,000 --> 00:15:07,000

It's got a big engine there too.

221

00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:08,000

Unbelievable!

222

00:15:09,000 --> 00:15:19,000

Packing a whopping 1,800 horsepower, the Avenger's right R2600 twin-cyclone engine has us cruising above the clouds in no time.

223

00:15:20,000 --> 00:15:23,000

There's a better view than this, I haven't seen it.

224

00:15:27,000 --> 00:15:28,000

Oh, amazing!

225

00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:30,000

This is sick!

226

00:15:30,000 --> 00:15:31,000

Huh!

227

00:15:32,000 --> 00:15:34,000

It really does feel staple.

228

00:15:34,000 --> 00:15:38,000

I mean, it's just an absolutely smooth ride up here in this thing.

229

00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:40,000

It lets the facility when you drop a car on it.

230

00:15:41,000 --> 00:15:44,000

It's like riding in a Cadillac up here. I mean, it's smooth.

231

00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:50,000

Affectionately nicknamed the Turkey, the Avenger was built like a truck, and she handles like one.

232

00:15:51,000 --> 00:15:54,000

Go ahead, grab that stick to feel how heavy that thing is.

233

00:15:56,000 --> 00:15:58,000

And I'm flying an Avenger.

234

00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:04,000

You can't see it, John, but I'm current from here to here.

235

00:16:05,000 --> 00:16:10,000

Somebody pinched me. I am actually piloting an airplane from World War II.

236

00:16:10,000 --> 00:16:15,000

And John wasn't kidding about the heavy stick. This bird could use some power steering.

237

00:16:16,000 --> 00:16:18,000

Do you want to grab someone's arm?

238

00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:23,000

Unbelievable! What a thrill!

239

00:16:23,000 --> 00:16:24,000

What a thrill!

240

00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:31,000

Okay, she's all yours.

241

00:16:33,000 --> 00:16:35,000

You're flying an Avenger for a big project.

242

00:16:35,000 --> 00:16:37,000

Plus, it's luggage.

243

00:16:37,000 --> 00:16:39,000

That's something that is really interesting, right?

244

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:42,000

Because I guess every design advantage is also a disadvantage.

245

00:16:42,000 --> 00:16:49,000

And one of the disadvantages of these big, beautiful wings is they really hurt your sight lines underneath you.

246

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:54,000

It's easy to see how the plane's design may have contributed to the accident.

247

00:16:54,000 --> 00:17:02,000

We know from declassified reports that a squadron of pilots were practicing a newly devised attack called the Anvil Torpedo Maneuver.

248

00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:07,000

Suddenly, one of the planes, being flown by Dennis Ruhl, did something unexpected.

249

00:17:08,000 --> 00:17:13,000

We know that Ruhl's plane, the Avenger that's lost, dipped out of the formation.

250

00:17:13,000 --> 00:17:15,000

He must have something going on in the cockpit.

251

00:17:16,000 --> 00:17:23,000

I was thinking the same thing. Maybe he was already struggling with some sort of problem with the plane and that's why he dipped down.

252

00:17:23,000 --> 00:17:29,000

Whatever the cause, the aircraft suddenly disappeared from the view of the nearest plane, flown by John Buckley.

253

00:17:29,000 --> 00:17:37,000

So when Ruhl's plane dipped out of formation, Buckley would have had almost no ability to see where he was underneath him.

254

00:17:37,000 --> 00:17:39,000

Yeah, he was having a hard time.

255

00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:45,000

Then Ruhl pulls back up, smashing his plane into Buckley's tail section.

256

00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:51,000

He collides with Buckley's plane, that's what causes the accident.

257

00:17:51,000 --> 00:17:57,000

It's strange that he would have done that because he must have had a clear view coming up on Buckley's tail.

258

00:17:57,000 --> 00:17:59,000

He's probably distracted from where he was.

259

00:17:59,000 --> 00:18:04,000

How bad would the damage have to have been to the tail section to just take this thing out completely?

260

00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:09,000

The elevator's taken out and you lose the ability to rotate the plane.

261

00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:13,000

So you have to take one hit, but it's not as it's called.

262

00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:18,000

Unable to recover, both Avengers crash into the Pacific.

263

00:18:22,000 --> 00:18:30,000

Buckley manages to escape, but Dennis Ruhl and his crew, Ernest Williams and Russell Guzetta, disappear, never to be seen again.

264

00:18:31,000 --> 00:18:36,000

I really have a whole different view on this accident now that I'm up here.

265

00:18:36,000 --> 00:18:44,000

We're searching for a lost adventure, but we're also searching for these three individuals to sit where they sat and what is effectively an identical aircraft.

266

00:18:44,000 --> 00:18:46,000

It really pricks it home.

267

00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:52,000

I now have a better sense of how the accident happened.

268

00:18:53,000 --> 00:18:57,000

After all, finding a wingman suddenly lost below you is nearly impossible.

269

00:18:58,000 --> 00:19:03,000

As for what happened inside Rules Cockpit, that I'm less certain of.

270

00:19:06,000 --> 00:19:16,000

To dive deeper into this cold case, I get back on the road and drive 200 miles north up the Pacific coast from San Diego to Ventura, California.

271

00:19:17,000 --> 00:19:22,000

There, I take a ferry to Anacapa Island and paddle out to the scene of the accident.

272

00:19:23,000 --> 00:19:26,000

Welcome to the Channel Islands.

273

00:19:26,000 --> 00:19:33,000

These eight lonely spits of land are perched just off the coast of Southern California.

274

00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:48,000

They're absolutely stunning, but this could also be a place of wild oceans and terrible storms, which is why these islands are home to more than 300 reported shipwrecks and airplane crashes.

275

00:19:49,000 --> 00:19:56,000

I'm out here to meet Project Recover Historian Colin Colburn, who's asked me to meet him up there at the old lighthouse.

276

00:19:57,000 --> 00:20:00,000

Now all I need to do is figure out how to get up there.

277

00:20:01,000 --> 00:20:03,000

Probably an elevator out here, right?

278

00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:14,000

Surrounded on all sides by 200-foot cliffs, the only way on or off the island is a steep and

seemingly endless staircase.

279

00:20:18,000 --> 00:20:20,000

You got this! You got this!

280

00:20:24,000 --> 00:20:28,000

Okay. Okay, where's the lighthouse?

281

00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:30,000

Oh, come on!

282

00:20:33,000 --> 00:20:42,000

Aside from tens of thousands of birds and a lonely ranger station, no permanent residents have called Anacapa home since the lighthouse was automated in 1966.

283

00:20:43,000 --> 00:20:50,000

Project Recover Historian Colin Colburn has asked me to meet him here to reveal new intel that could make or break our search.

284

00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:53,000

Hey Josh, good to see you as well.

285

00:20:53,000 --> 00:20:54,000

You're a hard man to find.

286

00:20:54,000 --> 00:20:59,000

I know, I dragged you all the way up here to Anacapa Island because this is where the accident actually happened.

287

00:21:00,000 --> 00:21:01,000

Right here in this airspace?

288

00:21:01,000 --> 00:21:02,000

Absolutely.

289

00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:06,000

And I'm guessing that Anacapa today probably looks a lot like it looked in 45?

290

00:21:06,000 --> 00:21:07,000

Absolutely does.

291

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:09,000

Most of these structures are exactly the same.

292

00:21:09,000 --> 00:21:13,000

Including this lighthouse up here, which was the Coast Guard Lookout Station.

293

00:21:13,000 --> 00:21:20,000

Having had a chance now to fly in one of these planes, I have a sense of the way they were maneuvering up there. You're the historian though.

294

00:21:20,000 --> 00:21:22,000

How does history help us unlock this case?

295

00:21:22,000 --> 00:21:28,000

I've made a pretty big break and we were able to actually locate the accident report. This is it, right here.

296

00:21:28,000 --> 00:21:29,000

So where was this?

297

00:21:29,000 --> 00:21:32,000

These are actually held at the National Archives. Wow!

298

00:21:33,000 --> 00:21:38,000

So the report actually reveals what happened to the two aircraft in the collision from Ensign Buckley.

299

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:39,000

His own statement.

300

00:21:39,000 --> 00:21:40,000

That's right.

301

00:21:40,000 --> 00:21:44,000

You don't get more eyewitness than a statement from the guy that was hit by the missing plane.

302

00:21:44,000 --> 00:21:45,000

Absolutely.

303

00:21:45,000 --> 00:21:49,000

Buckley's statement confirms the second hand accounts of the crash.

304

00:21:49,000 --> 00:21:54,000

Rules propeller hit the tail of his plane, critically damaging both aircraft.

305

00:21:54,000 --> 00:21:57,000

But there's an even bigger revelation in the accident report.

306

00:21:57,000 --> 00:21:59,000

There were eyewitnesses.

307

00:21:59,000 --> 00:22:07,000

Coast Guard officers on duty in the lighthouse watched as the stricken Avengers collided and went down on either side of the island.

308

00:22:08,000 --> 00:22:15,000

The other incredible thing that we get from this accident report are the actual compass bearings and distances offshore,

309

00:22:15,000 --> 00:22:18,000

where these Avengers crash from the perspective of the Coast Guard in the lighthouse.

310

00:22:18,000 --> 00:22:19,000

That's huge.

311

00:22:19,000 --> 00:22:26,000

It's absolutely huge. Ensign Buckley's plane crashed 300 degrees from the lighthouse about 100 yards offshore.

312

00:22:26,000 --> 00:22:27,000

And so where is that?

313

00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:28,000

So that's actually right out that way.

314

00:22:28,000 --> 00:22:29,000

Right that way?

315

00:22:29,000 --> 00:22:30,000

Yes.

316

00:22:30,000 --> 00:22:32,000

Okay, so Buckley's plane goes down over there.

317

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:34,000

That's a known wreck somewhere out there.

318

00:22:34,000 --> 00:22:44,000

But when it comes to the lost Avenger, the accident report says Ensign Ruhl's plane did not recover in any manner and made a glide straight into the water about 400 yards,

319

00:22:44,000 --> 00:22:49,000

bearing 170 degrees true from Anacapa Island lighthouse.

320

00:22:49,000 --> 00:22:51,000

It's actually right out that way.

321

00:22:51,000 --> 00:22:52,000

That way.

322

00:22:52,000 --> 00:22:54,000

This is kind of a smoking gun.

323

00:22:54,000 --> 00:23:02,000

If this is accurate, then 400 yards out on that bearing, there should be a lost World War II plane right out there, 400 yards offshore.

324

00:23:09,000 --> 00:23:16,000

I'm searching for an Avenger torpedo bomber that collided with its wingman and disappeared off of Anacapa Island.

325

00:23:17,000 --> 00:23:25,000

Historian Colin Colburn just made a huge break in the case, unearthing an eyewitness account of where the lost Avenger went down.

326

00:23:25,000 --> 00:23:27,000

This is kind of a smoking gun.

327

00:23:27,000 --> 00:23:35,000

If this is accurate, then 400 yards out on that bearing, there should be a lost World War II plane right out there, 400 yards offshore.

328

00:23:35,000 --> 00:23:38,000

So where does that leave us?

329

00:23:38,000 --> 00:23:42,000

Well, from here we can actually test the accuracy of these eyewitness reports.

330

00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:45,000

And we can do that because we know where Buckley's plane is.

331

00:23:45,000 --> 00:23:47,000

We have a baseline sitting out there.

332

00:23:47,000 --> 00:23:48,000

Absolutely.

333

00:23:48,000 --> 00:23:53,000

Diving the known wreck may help us solve the mystery of the lost Avenger.

334

00:23:53,000 --> 00:23:58,000

Does the distance from shore and bearing off the lighthouse match the Coast Guard account?

335

00:23:58,000 --> 00:24:03,000

And is the damage to the tail of the plane consistent with Buckley's description of the collision?

336

00:24:04,000 --> 00:24:10,000

Okay, so we start with the known wreck and then take that data and hopefully find the lost wreck.

337

00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:11,000

That's the hope.

338

00:24:11,000 --> 00:24:12,000

All right.

339

00:24:12,000 --> 00:24:15,000

To help with that, Project Recover has arranged a vessel to take you out there.

340

00:24:15,000 --> 00:24:16,000

Bigger than my kayak?

341

00:24:16,000 --> 00:24:18,000

Slightly bigger than your kayak.

342

00:24:23,000 --> 00:24:24,000

Colin wasn't kidding.

343

00:24:24,000 --> 00:24:28,000

Project Recover is working off of the research vessel Shearwater.

344

00:24:28,000 --> 00:24:38,000

This 62-foot catamaran was custom built by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration to conduct mapping and research in the Channel Islands.

345

00:24:38,000 --> 00:24:47,000

We motor out to the coordinates of the known Avenger wreck, where I link back up with Project Recover co-founder Eric Terrell and his team on the top deck.

346

00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:50,000

Hey, Josh, let me introduce you to Heidi.

347

00:24:50,000 --> 00:24:51,000

Hey, an analyst.

348

00:24:51,000 --> 00:24:52,000

Nice to meet you.

349

00:24:52,000 --> 00:24:53,000

Pleasure.

350

00:24:53,000 --> 00:24:54,000

Andrew, our lead archaeologist.

351

00:24:54,000 --> 00:24:55,000

Nice to meet you as well.

352

00:24:55,000 --> 00:24:58,000

So, okay, directly underneath us should be an Avenger.

353

00:24:58,000 --> 00:24:59,000

That's correct.

354

00:25:00,000 --> 00:25:09,000

Accidentally discovered by divers, the location of the wreck was officially catalogued by the National Park Service in 1996.

355

00:25:09,000 --> 00:25:11,000

Let's start by talking about where we are.

356

00:25:11,000 --> 00:25:15,000

We've got Anacapa Island right here, and there's our lighthouse.

357

00:25:15,000 --> 00:25:19,000

So the report puts the wreck at 300-degree bearing.

358

00:25:19,000 --> 00:25:22,000

Kind of take a look at where we are right here.

359

00:25:22,000 --> 00:25:27,000

We see that the bearing lines up almost perfectly to what the historical report is telling us.

360

00:25:27,000 --> 00:25:29,000

And the distance from the lighthouse?

361

00:25:29,000 --> 00:25:31,000

The distance in the wreck is as 100 yards.

362

00:25:31,000 --> 00:25:35,000

Now, I'm no expert, but we are way more than 100 yards from that lighthouse.

363

00:25:35,000 --> 00:25:36,000

Way more.

364

00:25:36,000 --> 00:25:38,000

We are sitting at about 1800 yards from the lighthouse.

365

00:25:38,000 --> 00:25:40,000

Okay, so that's off by a factor of 18.

366

00:25:40,000 --> 00:25:41,000

Yes.

367

00:25:41,000 --> 00:25:42,000

So that's hugely inaccurate.

368

00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:43,000

Big time.

369

00:25:43,000 --> 00:25:44,000

This is really common.

370

00:25:44,000 --> 00:25:46,000

Fog of war, chaos.

371

00:25:46,000 --> 00:25:48,000

The angles are often very accurate.

372

00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:51,000

Distances are generally horribly wrong.

373

00:25:51,000 --> 00:25:55,000

So what does this data tell us about the lost Avenger on the other side of the island?

374

00:25:55,000 --> 00:25:58,000

It's probably going to be on an accurate bearing on that side,

375

00:25:58,000 --> 00:26:00,000

but we probably want to think about moving a greater distance from shore

376

00:26:00,000 --> 00:26:02,000

than what the historical record is telling us.

377

00:26:02,000 --> 00:26:05,000

Right, because that distance may be just as inaccurate over there.

378

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:06,000

Exactly.

379

00:26:06,000 --> 00:26:08,000

So in terms of the known wreck underneath us, what's the plan?

380

00:26:08,000 --> 00:26:10,000

Well, we would love to get some imagery.

381

00:26:10,000 --> 00:26:14,000

And if we can get a lot of very high resolution photographs that overlap in all directions,

382

00:26:14,000 --> 00:26:19,000

then we can use photogrammetry, which is a technique which will allow us to align those photos

383

00:26:19,000 --> 00:26:23,000

and give us a 3D representation, a model of what the wreck looks like today.

384

00:26:23,000 --> 00:26:24,000

Got it.

385

00:26:24,000 --> 00:26:27,000

Get lots of photos of the wreck, use that to build a 3D model.

386

00:26:27,000 --> 00:26:29,000

Exactly, and that information will allow us to be able to understand

387

00:26:29,000 --> 00:26:32,000

if the crash site really is consistent with the wreck reports.

388

00:26:32,000 --> 00:26:35,000

So, Heidi, you're diving down or?

389

00:26:35,000 --> 00:26:36,000

The water is a little cold.

390

00:26:36,000 --> 00:26:37,000

I think it's your turn.

391

00:26:37,000 --> 00:26:38,000

Yeah.

392

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:42,000

We've only just met, Heidi, but you're really catching on to how this always goes for me.

393

00:26:45,000 --> 00:26:49,000

I gear up and dive in.

394

00:26:55,000 --> 00:27:01,000

The frigid water bites through my thick wetsuit, but the real danger of this dive is depth.

395

00:27:01,000 --> 00:27:06,000

The plane rests at nearly 120 feet, which means I only have a limited amount of bottom time

396

00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:09,000

before I have to surface to avoid decompression sickness.

397

00:27:09,000 --> 00:27:12,000

I've got to make every second count.

398

00:27:13,000 --> 00:27:15,000

Josh, do you copy?

399

00:27:15,000 --> 00:27:19,000

I am not so copy, and I am following the anchor line down.

400

00:27:19,000 --> 00:27:22,000

How's the view? How's the water temp?

401

00:27:22,000 --> 00:27:25,000

The water is freezing. Visibility is not great.

402

00:27:25,000 --> 00:27:28,000

Maybe 10 or 15 feet tops.

403

00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:31,000

Not able to see the bottom at this point.

404

00:27:31,000 --> 00:27:33,000

Keep heading down the anchor line.

405

00:27:33,000 --> 00:27:36,000

We're really close to the wreck. You should see it right away.

406

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:41,000

Top sign, this is Josh. I am approaching the bottom.

407

00:27:42,000 --> 00:27:44,000

No sign of the wreck.

408

00:27:44,000 --> 00:27:47,000

Josh, we're about 10 yards from the wreck to the west.

409

00:27:47,000 --> 00:27:50,000

So just keep coming that direction, and you should point it.

410

00:27:50,000 --> 00:27:54,000

Copy that. I'll leave the anchor line and head on the line. Stand by.

411

00:27:56,000 --> 00:28:02,000

Besides a lone crab, who is definitely not happy to see me, this place is a desert.

412

00:28:02,000 --> 00:28:08,000

Did we anchor too far off the target? The clock is ticking. I have to find this plane.

413

00:28:11,000 --> 00:28:13,000

I got it. I see the wreck.

414

00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:22,000

Absolutely incredible.

415

00:28:27,000 --> 00:28:29,000

Josh, what's the condition?

416

00:28:29,000 --> 00:28:32,000

The condition is amazing, actually.

417

00:28:32,000 --> 00:28:35,000

The entire aircraft appears to be here.

418

00:28:37,000 --> 00:28:41,000

Both wings are attached. You can clearly make out the fuselage.

419

00:28:41,000 --> 00:28:44,000

It's in great shape, considering what it's been through.

420

00:28:44,000 --> 00:28:49,000

All right, good copy. Go ahead and take your photographs. You've got limited time at the bottom.

421

00:28:57,000 --> 00:29:05,000

The thousands of photographs I take will be digitally stitched together to create a 3D model for detailed forensic study topside.

422

00:29:05,000 --> 00:29:12,000

The outline of the plane is so clean, all the big sections of intermissing, the whole fuselage section is collapsed in.

423

00:29:12,000 --> 00:29:17,000

Not surprising, given it's a lot of aluminum and just natural degradation down there.

424

00:29:17,000 --> 00:29:22,000

I've circled the plane a couple times. I got a couple photos here.

425

00:29:22,000 --> 00:29:24,000

Hey Josh, how's your bottom time?

426

00:29:24,000 --> 00:29:28,000

I've only got a couple of minutes left before I'm going to need to start surfacing.

427

00:29:28,000 --> 00:29:33,000

Copy that. Be sure to focus on the tail section if you can. That's where it was hit.

428

00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:37,000

We'll do, I'll take another pass on the tail, and then I'm coming up.

429

00:29:38,000 --> 00:29:44,000

There's not much left. It's really just an impression. I'll document everything I can.

430

00:29:44,000 --> 00:29:45,000

Yeah.

431

00:29:58,000 --> 00:30:03,000

As I move in close, I'm struck that this is more than just a wreck. It's a memorial.

432

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:12,000

The pilot and radio man survived the crash, but tail gunner Lawrence Werks didn't make it.

433

00:30:13,000 --> 00:30:18,000

The round impression at the rear of the cockpit is all that's left of the turret where he sat.

434

00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:26,000

Okay, topside, I am headed to the surface. I'll meet you at the back of the boat.

435

00:30:26,000 --> 00:30:28,000

Copy that.

436

00:30:32,000 --> 00:30:37,000

After a brief decompression stop on the anchor line, I make my way to the surface.

437

00:30:38,000 --> 00:30:41,000

Hey Josh, how'd the dive go?

438

00:30:41,000 --> 00:30:50,000

Oh man, spectacular. All this talk about these two Avengers, where they were, the men that were in them,

439

00:30:50,000 --> 00:30:58,000

to go down there and see one of them, takes the whole thing from a story to a piece of history, really.

440

00:30:58,000 --> 00:31:03,000

No, I get it, Josh. Seeing those wrecks in person just really connects you to the site.

441

00:31:03,000 --> 00:31:05,000

Really powerful to see it down there.

442

00:31:05,000 --> 00:31:08,000

Great, let's get you on board and let's start data processing.

443

00:31:10,000 --> 00:31:14,000

While I dry off, Heidi begins rendering the photos of Buckley's Avenger.

444

00:31:16,000 --> 00:31:20,000

A few hours later, we head inside the cabin to take a look.

445

00:31:21,000 --> 00:31:23,000

Okay, Heidi, what do we got?

446

00:31:23,000 --> 00:31:26,000

Well, you collected a whole bunch of images and they look amazing.

447

00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:27,000

We got good data.

448

00:31:27,000 --> 00:31:29,000

We did. It looks really good. You want to see it?

449

00:31:29,000 --> 00:31:30,000

Yes, I'm dying to see it.

450

00:31:30,000 --> 00:31:31,000

Here we go.

451

00:31:31,000 --> 00:31:36,000

After nearly eight decades of silence, the known wreck has a new story to tell,

452

00:31:36,000 --> 00:31:40,000

revealing clues that could lead us to the lost Avenger.

453

00:31:42,000 --> 00:31:43,000

This is incredible.

454

00:31:43,000 --> 00:31:44,000

Look at that.

455

00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:55,000

I've joined forces with Project Recover to hunt for a World War II Avenger torpedo bomber.

456

00:31:57,000 --> 00:31:59,000

I got it. I see the wreck.

457

00:31:59,000 --> 00:32:03,000

After photographing the known wreck of the plane it crashed into,

458

00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:08,000

a forensic 3D model has been constructed that might lead us to the missing plane.

459

00:32:09,000 --> 00:32:10,000

We got good data.

460

00:32:10,000 --> 00:32:11,000

We did. It looks really good. You want to see it?

461

00:32:11,000 --> 00:32:12,000

Yes, I'm dying to see it.

462

00:32:14,000 --> 00:32:15,000

That is amazing.

463

00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:18,000

Look how much detail we have here.

464

00:32:19,000 --> 00:32:26,000

Like CSI World War II, this model allows Eric to reconstruct a play-by-play of the moment of impact.

465

00:32:27,000 --> 00:32:30,000

Take a look at the wing and we can see the damage where it hit the water.

466

00:32:30,000 --> 00:32:32,000

It's lost some of the aluminum skin along here.

467

00:32:32,000 --> 00:32:34,000

That might have been torn away during the accident.

468

00:32:34,000 --> 00:32:40,000

Probably cartwheeled in, probably hit port wing and the plane's right side up.

469

00:32:40,000 --> 00:32:44,000

If you look at the after-action report, it calls out how it was an immediate water landing

470

00:32:44,000 --> 00:32:45,000

and didn't call it a water crash.

471

00:32:45,000 --> 00:32:46,000

That's right.

472

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:52,000

And that's not the only new intel we gather that will aid our search for the lost Avenger.

473

00:32:52,000 --> 00:32:57,000

The one thing that jumped out at me when I was down there is the tail section, which is in a much worse shape.

474

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:00,000

It's just almost completely gone.

475

00:33:00,000 --> 00:33:05,000

Because Rule's plane came up and his propeller actually connected with that horizontal stabilizer there.

476

00:33:05,000 --> 00:33:07,000

So that might have been destroyed in flight even.

477

00:33:08,000 --> 00:33:14,000

If the tail section of the known wreck was shredded in flight, one can only imagine the damage done to the propeller

478

00:33:14,000 --> 00:33:17,000

and canopy of the plane that hit it.

479

00:33:17,000 --> 00:33:21,000

There's a good chance that pilot Dennis Rule was killed instantly.

480

00:33:21,000 --> 00:33:25,000

It's amazing to see this because it won't really be around forever.

481

00:33:25,000 --> 00:33:28,000

You know, I mean the actual wreck is eventually going to be consumed by the ocean.

482

00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:29,000

Sure.

483

00:33:29,000 --> 00:33:32,000

I mean we're seeing that here and it's very rapidly degrading now.

484

00:33:32,000 --> 00:33:33,000

Right.

485

00:33:33,000 --> 00:33:38,000

If you look around the site, you see how the sediment has a really different texture to it.

486

00:33:38,000 --> 00:33:41,000

That's because a lot of these sites have become artificial reefs.

487

00:33:41,000 --> 00:33:44,000

Life has sort of taken hold in this area.

488

00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:45,000

I call it the halo effect.

489

00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:50,000

So let's talk about how this helps us moving forward looking for the lost Avenger.

490

00:33:51,000 --> 00:33:53,000

Look how flat this is to the seafloor.

491

00:33:53,000 --> 00:33:57,000

It's not very proud so we need to keep that in mind when we're looking for different sonar targets.

492

00:33:57,000 --> 00:33:59,000

Right, it's not really raised up.

493

00:33:59,000 --> 00:34:01,000

It's just, it's got a really, really low profile.

494

00:34:01,000 --> 00:34:04,000

This whole elevation, it might be maybe at most three feet off the seabed.

495

00:34:04,000 --> 00:34:08,000

So that's going to tell us in the acoustic data how big of a shadow it might be throwing down on the seafloor

496

00:34:08,000 --> 00:34:13,000

when we're trying to discriminate rocks and other debris from the airplane crash.

497

00:34:14,000 --> 00:34:19,000

The lost Avenger which sustained heavy damage may be in far worse shape.

498

00:34:19,000 --> 00:34:24,000

If all that's left is scattered debris, the wreckage will blend in with the natural rock formations,

499

00:34:24,000 --> 00:34:27,000

making it nearly impossible to find.

500

00:34:28,000 --> 00:34:29,000

Now we've got another one to find.

501

00:34:29,000 --> 00:34:30,000

Yeah, absolutely.

502

00:34:31,000 --> 00:34:38,000

Armed with intel from the known wreck, we reposition the sheer water on the south side of Anacapa Island.

503

00:34:38,000 --> 00:34:43,000

The Coast Guard eyewitnesses stated that the lost Avenger made a glide straight into the water

504

00:34:43,000 --> 00:34:49,000

at a bearing of 170 degrees and crashed roughly 400 yards from the lighthouse.

505

00:34:49,000 --> 00:34:52,000

This will be the center of our search grid.

506

00:34:53,000 --> 00:34:54,000

Time to scan.

507

00:34:54,000 --> 00:34:55,000

Yep.

508

00:34:55,000 --> 00:34:58,000

We're now on the opposite side of the island and we're roughly on that 170 degree.

509

00:34:58,000 --> 00:35:04,000

We're about on that bearing right now, so we really need to set up a scan area to look at that whole region south of the lighthouse.

510

00:35:04,000 --> 00:35:06,000

So we got a lot of ocean to cover here.

511

00:35:06,000 --> 00:35:09,000

So the way to do that is we use the underwater robots.

512

00:35:09,000 --> 00:35:12,000

These are AUVs, autonomous underwater vehicles.

513

00:35:12,000 --> 00:35:14,000

Our scans today, they're going to be a four hour mission each.

514

00:35:14,000 --> 00:35:18,000

So if we get them all in the water four hours later, they come back with data and hopefully...

515

00:35:18,000 --> 00:35:19,000

Hopefully our target's in there.

516

00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:20,000

Hopefully we got a plane.

517

00:35:20,000 --> 00:35:21,000

Yes.

518

00:35:21,000 --> 00:35:22,000

Okay, let's do it.

519

00:35:23,000 --> 00:35:28,000

Eric and I break out the big guns, or more accurately, torpedoes.

520

00:35:28,000 --> 00:35:29,000

We're down.

521

00:35:29,000 --> 00:35:31,000

Okay, in the water.

522

00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:37,000

We gingerly lower Enzo and Magnum into the drink, followed by Scout.

523

00:35:39,000 --> 00:35:42,000

Scout costs roughly half a million dollars to build.

524

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:43,000

Got speed.

525

00:35:43,000 --> 00:35:47,000

But according to her track record, she's worth every penny.

526

00:35:47,000 --> 00:35:49,000

Scout holds the record for the most number of aircraft found.

527

00:35:49,000 --> 00:35:50,000

Which is how many?

528

00:35:50,000 --> 00:35:51,000

Eight.

529

00:35:51,000 --> 00:35:52,000

Wow, okay.

530

00:35:52,000 --> 00:35:53,000

Hopefully today, nine.

531

00:35:53,000 --> 00:35:54,000

I'm sad that I'm up.

532

00:35:54,000 --> 00:35:55,000

All right.

533

00:35:55,000 --> 00:35:56,000

It's up to you, Scout.

534

00:35:57,000 --> 00:36:02,000

The distance in the accident report for the known wreck was wildly inaccurate.

535

00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:07,000

So Eric's team has programmed these sonar-equipped drones to cast a wide net.

536

00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:15,000

The AUVs will run four mile-long tracks on the south side of the island and scan more than two miles offshore,

537

00:36:15,000 --> 00:36:19,000

covering eight and a half square miles of ocean on this mission.

538

00:36:19,000 --> 00:36:25,000

Diving a search zone this size would take months, but the robots can do it in a day.

539

00:36:25,000 --> 00:36:29,000

Depth-rated up to 2,000 feet and fully automated to avoid obstacles,

540

00:36:29,000 --> 00:36:34,000

the bots glide through the water blasting out sonar pings to map the bottom.

541

00:36:35,000 --> 00:36:40,000

Meanwhile, we hunker down for the hardest part of this hunt, waiting.

542

00:36:47,000 --> 00:36:53,000

Four tedious hours later, we pull the AUVs back on deck

543

00:36:54,000 --> 00:36:57,000

and gather at Heidi's Monitor to review the data.

544

00:36:58,000 --> 00:37:00,000

So, okay, how'd we do?

545

00:37:00,000 --> 00:37:03,000

We can see the lanes here as the vehicles mow the lawn.

546

00:37:03,000 --> 00:37:06,000

Those vertical stripes are the vehicles driving back and forth underwater.

547

00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:09,000

Okay, so what's in the data?

548

00:37:09,000 --> 00:37:11,000

There's a couple of very interesting targets in this dataset.

549

00:37:11,000 --> 00:37:12,000

Really?

550

00:37:12,000 --> 00:37:13,000

Yes.

551

00:37:13,000 --> 00:37:14,000

Okay, what do we got?

552

00:37:14,000 --> 00:37:18,000

So here's one of the particular targets that's very high interest to us.

553

00:37:18,000 --> 00:37:25,000

We see very sharp sonar returns, very sharp angles to the geometry of the target.

554

00:37:25,000 --> 00:37:26,000

Yeah.

555

00:37:26,000 --> 00:37:30,000

It's particularly interesting because it is just sitting by itself in an otherwise barren place, right?

556

00:37:30,000 --> 00:37:31,000

Yeah.

557

00:37:31,000 --> 00:37:33,000

That's definitely something to check out.

558

00:37:33,000 --> 00:37:37,000

We put a pin in our first target and run through more promising hits.

559

00:37:37,000 --> 00:37:40,000

I mean, that looks a little more rock-like, don't you think?

560

00:37:40,000 --> 00:37:45,000

Yeah, it does, but it's still sitting by itself out on an open plane.

561

00:37:45,000 --> 00:37:46,000

It's got some relief to it.

562

00:37:46,000 --> 00:37:51,000

There certainly wouldn't be an entire aircraft, but if this airplane broke up in flight,

563

00:37:51,000 --> 00:37:54,000

this could be some portion of aviation debris.

564

00:37:54,000 --> 00:37:55,000

Okay, sure, yeah.

565

00:37:55,000 --> 00:37:59,000

I mean, anything that's out there that's isolated like this feels like it's worth looking at,

right?

566

00:37:59,000 --> 00:38:00,000

Yeah.

567

00:38:00,000 --> 00:38:05,000

Nothing screams, I'm an airplane with unmistakable features like wings or a tail,

568

00:38:05,000 --> 00:38:09,000

but to the trained eye, these sonar targets tell a story.

569

00:38:09,000 --> 00:38:11,000

You can see these really bright returns.

570

00:38:11,000 --> 00:38:12,000

It looks almost white on the screen.

571

00:38:12,000 --> 00:38:13,000

Right.

572

00:38:13,000 --> 00:38:16,000

That usually indicates certain kinds of rock or metal.

573

00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:19,000

You got a nice long, linear feature that could be something like the fuselage.

574

00:38:19,000 --> 00:38:21,000

You have two smaller things, just the south of that.

575

00:38:21,000 --> 00:38:25,000

Maybe that's something like the engine that came apart off of the fuselage.

576

00:38:25,000 --> 00:38:31,000

And we see fish around it, which means it's been colonized by marine life.

577

00:38:31,000 --> 00:38:35,000

Well, it reminds me of the existing wreck in that it's sort of low profile,

578

00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:39,000

there's not a lot showing, and there's a lot of scatter there, so it could be a debris field.

579

00:38:39,000 --> 00:38:40,000

I mean, that's huge.

580

00:38:40,000 --> 00:38:42,000

I think it's definitely worth taking a look.

581

00:38:42,000 --> 00:38:43,000

How deep are these targets?

582

00:38:43,000 --> 00:38:47,000

So these targets range anywhere from 180 feet to about 220 feet.

583

00:38:47,000 --> 00:38:49,000

Okay, so too deep for us to dive.

584

00:38:49,000 --> 00:38:51,000

We're going to have to send the ROV down.

585

00:38:51,000 --> 00:38:53,000

Sure. Okay. Let's send a robot.

586

00:38:53,000 --> 00:39:00,000

Back on deck, Eric and I ready a remote underwater vehicle to take a closer look at the first target.

587

00:39:00,000 --> 00:39:03,000

Eric, I can't help but notice that this ROV is named Barry.

588

00:39:03,000 --> 00:39:06,000

Yeah, one of our favorite singers, Barry Mantelow.

589

00:39:06,000 --> 00:39:09,000

So in honor of Barry, we've named our robot.

590

00:39:09,000 --> 00:39:11,000

Why is it really named Barry?

591

00:39:11,000 --> 00:39:15,000

You know, we wanted a really kick-ass name, Barracuda.

592

00:39:15,000 --> 00:39:16,000

Yeah, I can see that.

593

00:39:16,000 --> 00:39:19,000

Barry kind of is short for Barracuda.

594

00:39:19,000 --> 00:39:24,000

How about, you know, I don't want to tell your business, but how about just Barracuda,

595

00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:26,000

which is a way cooler name than Barry?

596

00:39:26,000 --> 00:39:29,000

To be honest, I've lost all control of naming of these robots.

597

00:39:29,000 --> 00:39:30,000

Somebody else did this?

598

00:39:30,000 --> 00:39:31,000

Yes.

599

00:39:31,000 --> 00:39:32,000

Okay, fair enough.

600

00:39:32,000 --> 00:39:33,000

Is Barry ready to go?

601

00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:35,000

I think Barry's ready to go.

602

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:40,000

To make sure Barry's voyage into the depths is as smooth as his crooner namesake,

603

00:39:40,000 --> 00:39:42,000

we rig a drop weight to a cable.

604

00:39:42,000 --> 00:39:43,000

Wins down.

605

00:39:43,000 --> 00:39:48,000

This will help the ROV hold position against the currents on the bottom.

606

00:39:48,000 --> 00:39:50,000

Okay, weights in the water.

607

00:39:50,000 --> 00:39:52,000

Barry follows.

608

00:39:52,000 --> 00:39:56,000

All right, lower your sound.

609

00:39:56,000 --> 00:39:57,000

Okay, ROV is in.

610

00:39:57,000 --> 00:40:04,000

And we carefully lower the ROV tether and weighted cable, securing the lines together as we go.

611

00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:05,000

Here we go.

612

00:40:05,000 --> 00:40:06,000

Okay.

613

00:40:06,000 --> 00:40:08,000

What's your depth, Bob?

614

00:40:08,000 --> 00:40:09,000

90.

615

00:40:09,000 --> 00:40:10,000

He's at 90?

616

00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:12,000

Does he have bottom lock?

617

00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:13,000

Yes.

618

00:40:13,000 --> 00:40:14,000

He's on the bottom?

619

00:40:14,000 --> 00:40:15,000

Yeah, let's go have a look.

620

00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:16,000

Okay, let's go see what's down there.

621

00:40:16,000 --> 00:40:22,000

Once again, we gather around the monitor as ROV pilot Bob Hess closes in on the target

622

00:40:22,000 --> 00:40:25,000

nearly 200 feet below us.

623

00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:33,000

Looks like something right there.

624

00:40:33,000 --> 00:40:34,000

Yeah.

625

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:38,000

Yeah, let's go towards that.

626

00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:42,000

A large man made object looms into view.

627

00:40:42,000 --> 00:40:44,000

Is this the lost Avenger?

628

00:40:44,000 --> 00:40:46,000

Something there.

629

00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:52,000

We're about 10 meters in front of us.

630

00:40:52,000 --> 00:40:53,000

Whatever it is.

631

00:40:53,000 --> 00:40:54,000

We got something.

632

00:40:54,000 --> 00:40:55,000

We got structure.

633

00:40:55,000 --> 00:40:56,000

Yeah.

634

00:40:56,000 --> 00:40:58,000

What are you?

635

00:40:58,000 --> 00:41:00,000

Look at that.

636

00:41:01,000 --> 00:41:11,000

At the USS Midway aircraft carrier in San Diego, I got a chance to kick the tires and light

637

00:41:11,000 --> 00:41:12,000

the fires.

638

00:41:12,000 --> 00:41:15,000

Mustang, this is Maverick.

639

00:41:15,000 --> 00:41:17,000

I got a bogey on my tail.

640

00:41:17,000 --> 00:41:19,000

I can't shake him.

641

00:41:19,000 --> 00:41:21,000

Goose, I can't shake him.

642

00:41:21,000 --> 00:41:23,000

We're caught in the jet wash.

643

00:41:23,000 --> 00:41:25,000

Goose, I'm losing control.

644

00:41:25,000 --> 00:41:27,000

I'm losing control.

645

00:41:27,000 --> 00:41:28,000

Ha!

646

00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:29,000

Ha!

647

00:41:34,000 --> 00:41:37,000

Sir, I apologize, but the museum's closing.

648

00:41:37,000 --> 00:41:40,000

Sorry, Goose, it's time to buzz the tower.

649

00:41:40,000 --> 00:41:42,000

Sir, that's a mannequin.

650

00:41:42,000 --> 00:41:43,000

Talk to me, Goose.

651

00:41:43,000 --> 00:41:44,000

Sir.

652

00:41:44,000 --> 00:41:45,000

Goose!

653

00:41:45,000 --> 00:41:47,000

Ha ha ha ha ha!

654

00:41:47,000 --> 00:41:49,000

Goose!

655

00:41:49,000 --> 00:41:51,000

No!

656

00:41:57,000 --> 00:42:01,000

We're trying to stop the Navender and its three-man crew lost in the waters off of Anacapa Island

657

00:42:01,000 --> 00:42:06,000

during a World War Two training mission.

658

00:42:06,000 --> 00:42:16,000

We've sent an ROV named Barrie, 200 feet beneath the waves, to lay eyes on a promising sonar target.

659

00:42:16,000 --> 00:42:17,000

We got something.

660

00:42:17,000 --> 00:42:18,000

We got structure.

661

00:42:18,000 --> 00:42:20,000

Yeah.

662

00:42:21,000 --> 00:42:22,000

What are you?

663

00:42:22,000 --> 00:42:25,000

And max life.

664

00:42:25,000 --> 00:42:26,000

Look at that.

665

00:42:26,000 --> 00:42:30,640

With the brights cranked up, we can see our target in stunning detail.

666

00:42:30,640 --> 00:42:31,840

It's a boat.

667

00:42:31,840 --> 00:42:35,280

It is not an airplane, but that looks like a shipwreck.

668

00:42:35,280 --> 00:42:36,880

Okay, so what are we looking at here?

669

00:42:36,880 --> 00:42:38,720

It's fiberglass, yeah?

670

00:42:38,720 --> 00:42:39,920

Yeah, okay.

671

00:42:39,920 --> 00:42:41,360

10 meters in length.

672

00:42:41,360 --> 00:42:42,920

And so what do you think?

673

00:42:42,920 --> 00:42:43,920

Not new, new.

674

00:42:43,920 --> 00:42:46,320

It's got a lot of growth on it, a lot of corrosion.

675

00:42:46,320 --> 00:42:48,000

How long do you think that's been down there?

676

00:42:48,000 --> 00:42:50,560

I'd say probably 20 or 30 years.

677

00:42:51,840 --> 00:42:54,400

And an old fishing boat, yeah.

678

00:42:54,400 --> 00:42:55,600

Is that the engine?

679

00:42:55,600 --> 00:42:56,480

Yeah.

680

00:42:56,480 --> 00:42:57,440

That might have been a window.

681

00:42:57,440 --> 00:43:00,480

It might have been like a forward cabin that's collapsed in.

682

00:43:00,480 --> 00:43:01,440

Is there writing on there?

683

00:43:01,440 --> 00:43:01,840

There is.

684

00:43:02,960 --> 00:43:03,920

See, it's upside down.

685

00:43:06,320 --> 00:43:07,200

That's awesome, guys.

686

00:43:07,200 --> 00:43:10,480

We have a \$30,000, 30 megapixel stills camera.

687

00:43:10,480 --> 00:43:11,280

Hey, guys.

688

00:43:11,280 --> 00:43:12,480

Try to shoot with iPhone.

689

00:43:12,480 --> 00:43:13,600

Play with your cell phone.

690

00:43:13,600 --> 00:43:16,160

J-E-F-F-R-I-E-S.

691

00:43:16,160 --> 00:43:17,040

Jeffries.

692

00:43:17,040 --> 00:43:19,120

The great sailing vessel Jeffries.

693

00:43:19,120 --> 00:43:21,280

Well, it's being looked at by Barry, the ROV.

694

00:43:21,280 --> 00:43:22,000

That's true.

695

00:43:22,000 --> 00:43:22,560

Fair.

696

00:43:22,560 --> 00:43:24,160

Don't be hard on Jeffries.

697

00:43:25,680 --> 00:43:29,360

It turns out Jeffries Boat Company built custom sport fishers.

698

00:43:29,360 --> 00:43:31,920

And if you're interested in a gently used model,

699

00:43:31,920 --> 00:43:34,560

I've got one for you just off of Anacapa Island.

700

00:43:35,600 --> 00:43:38,480

One target down, a half a dozen more to go.

701

00:43:38,480 --> 00:43:42,560

We pull up the ROV, motor to our second site,

702

00:43:42,560 --> 00:43:44,880

release Barry back into the briny depths.

703

00:43:45,440 --> 00:43:46,560

OK, ROV's in.

704

00:43:47,360 --> 00:43:49,440

And glue our faces to the monitor

705

00:43:49,440 --> 00:43:51,840

as we approach the next object of interest.

706

00:43:56,160 --> 00:43:57,200

Oh, oh, oh.

707

00:43:57,200 --> 00:43:57,760

Something there.

708

00:43:57,760 --> 00:43:58,720

What is it?

709

00:43:58,720 --> 00:44:00,160

Something coming out of the darkness there.

710

00:44:01,120 --> 00:44:02,960

All right, looks like the target's to the left here.

711

00:44:04,320 --> 00:44:05,280

Oh, there it is.

712

00:44:05,280 --> 00:44:06,800

Yeah.

713

00:44:06,800 --> 00:44:09,280

Finally, we home in on something man-made.

714

00:44:09,840 --> 00:44:11,600

It's long, whatever it is.

715

00:44:11,600 --> 00:44:12,160

Yeah.

716

00:44:12,160 --> 00:44:13,280

And that could be a fuselage.

717

00:44:14,400 --> 00:44:17,120

It's hard to tell because it does look like whatever is here.

718

00:44:17,120 --> 00:44:18,560

It's just encrusted and buried.

719

00:44:18,560 --> 00:44:21,600

But you would expect to see some debris that just jumps out.

720

00:44:21,600 --> 00:44:24,000

Typically, especially with the aluminum on the aircraft,

721

00:44:24,000 --> 00:44:27,360

we typically don't have a full encrustation like this.

722

00:44:27,920 --> 00:44:30,560

God, you think you should be one thing poking through somewhere

723

00:44:31,200 --> 00:44:33,040

to give you a hint as to what it is?

724

00:44:33,040 --> 00:44:35,600

If this was a fuselage, it's like where are the wings?

725

00:44:35,600 --> 00:44:36,560

Where is it?

726

00:44:36,560 --> 00:44:38,480

It feels like there'd be more of a debris field around it.

727

00:44:38,480 --> 00:44:38,880

Agreed.

728

00:44:38,880 --> 00:44:39,360

Yeah.

729

00:44:39,360 --> 00:44:40,560

Is that just rope?

730

00:44:40,560 --> 00:44:42,960

So if that's rope, that's probably not a good sign.

731

00:44:42,960 --> 00:44:43,360

Agreed.

732

00:44:44,320 --> 00:44:46,400

I think this is a ghost net sunk in the area.

733

00:44:46,400 --> 00:44:47,440

And we're seeing structure to it

734

00:44:47,440 --> 00:44:49,120

because it's all just clumped up in the bottom, you think?

735

00:44:49,680 --> 00:44:51,520

I don't think this is our airplane, guys.

736

00:44:51,520 --> 00:44:52,240

I don't either.

737

00:44:52,320 --> 00:44:55,920

I just love to see one piece of man-made something

738

00:44:55,920 --> 00:44:58,320

other than that piece of line down there, you know?

739

00:44:58,320 --> 00:45:00,000

Do we want to move on to the next target?

740

00:45:00,000 --> 00:45:00,800

Yeah.

741

00:45:00,800 --> 00:45:01,760

All right, let's do this.

742

00:45:02,960 --> 00:45:06,000

We repeat the same process all afternoon.

743

00:45:06,000 --> 00:45:07,120

All right, let's go to target four.

744

00:45:08,720 --> 00:45:09,760

Reposition boat.

745

00:45:09,760 --> 00:45:10,880

ROV's going in.

746

00:45:11,520 --> 00:45:14,880

Drop ROV and anxiously watch the monitor.

747

00:45:14,880 --> 00:45:15,920

Should be coming up on it.

748

00:45:15,920 --> 00:45:16,880

Oh, there's some fish on it.

749

00:45:18,160 --> 00:45:20,880

But ultimately, the results are the same.

750

00:45:20,960 --> 00:45:22,960

If the Avenger broke up on impact,

751

00:45:22,960 --> 00:45:25,120

finding bits of debris in these rocks

752

00:45:25,120 --> 00:45:27,200

is like finding a needle in a haystack.

753

00:45:30,640 --> 00:45:32,560

To rule out every possibility,

754

00:45:32,560 --> 00:45:35,680

we even run the AUVs on the north side of the island,

755

00:45:35,680 --> 00:45:37,520

near the known Avenger wreck site.

756

00:45:38,240 --> 00:45:42,080

All told, we scan more than eight square miles of ocean,

757

00:45:42,080 --> 00:45:44,480

investigating targets everywhere we go.

758

00:45:45,040 --> 00:45:45,920

Looks a lot like rocks.

759

00:45:46,480 --> 00:45:47,920

There's some of the other rocks.

760

00:45:49,760 --> 00:45:50,160

Yeah.

761

00:45:50,880 --> 00:45:53,120

But the lost plane remains a phantom.

762

00:45:53,760 --> 00:45:55,600

Exhausted and frustrated,

763

00:45:55,600 --> 00:45:57,360

we have run out of places to look.

764

00:46:01,520 --> 00:46:03,600

All right, we've scanned the south and we've scanned the north.

765

00:46:04,160 --> 00:46:05,200

No sign of an Avenger.

766

00:46:05,760 --> 00:46:07,120

This is the way it goes sometimes.

767

00:46:07,120 --> 00:46:07,200

Yeah.

768

00:46:07,200 --> 00:46:09,280

You exhaust all your options.

769

00:46:09,280 --> 00:46:10,800

You do a thorough job,

770

00:46:10,800 --> 00:46:13,040

and you still don't turn up the target you're looking for.

771

00:46:13,040 --> 00:46:16,240

We have one example where, after a large survey,

772

00:46:16,240 --> 00:46:17,520

much is like what we've done here.

773

00:46:18,240 --> 00:46:20,480

A year later, we found some anomalies in the data.

774

00:46:20,960 --> 00:46:22,560

And ended up finding aircraft in it.

775

00:46:22,560 --> 00:46:22,800

Really?

776

00:46:22,800 --> 00:46:25,920

So this missing aircraft could actually be in our data set right now,

777

00:46:25,920 --> 00:46:27,600

and we just haven't exhausted it.

778

00:46:27,600 --> 00:46:28,480

We never give up.

779

00:46:28,480 --> 00:46:28,800

Right.

780

00:46:28,800 --> 00:46:30,080

We're going to keep going back.

781

00:46:30,080 --> 00:46:31,520

We're going to keep looking at the data.

782

00:46:32,080 --> 00:46:34,000

And if we have to come back with more vehicles

783

00:46:34,000 --> 00:46:35,920

and different technology, then that's what we'll do.

784

00:46:38,240 --> 00:46:40,400

It's easy to think about these as airplanes,

785

00:46:40,400 --> 00:46:41,840

but this is really a story about people.

786

00:46:41,840 --> 00:46:42,400

Yeah.

787

00:46:42,400 --> 00:46:45,360

And there are three guys that are somewhere

788

00:46:45,360 --> 00:46:47,760

out off of this island waiting to be brought home.

789

00:46:48,880 --> 00:46:50,720

Guys, it's been an absolute pleasure.

790

00:46:50,720 --> 00:46:51,760

It really has.

791

00:46:51,760 --> 00:46:53,920

Thank you so much for letting us come out here and see what you do.

792

00:46:53,920 --> 00:46:57,520

It's a ton of work, and it's really important work, though,

793

00:46:57,520 --> 00:46:58,480

so I appreciate it.

794

00:46:58,480 --> 00:46:58,880

Yeah.

795

00:46:58,880 --> 00:47:00,080

Unfinished business.

796

00:47:00,080 --> 00:47:01,280

We've got to keep at it.

797

00:47:01,280 --> 00:47:01,840

Absolutely.

798

00:47:05,680 --> 00:47:09,440

Dennis Ruhl, Ernest Williams, and Russell Guzzetta

799

00:47:09,440 --> 00:47:12,560

are still missing, but they are no longer forgotten.

800

00:47:13,200 --> 00:47:16,320

In-depth research and cutting-edge forensics

801

00:47:16,320 --> 00:47:19,600

revealed the details of what happened that fateful day

802

00:47:19,600 --> 00:47:20,960

in 1945.

803

00:47:22,880 --> 00:47:25,440

And with Project Recover working the case,

804

00:47:25,440 --> 00:47:28,480

the Lost Avenger may take flight again soon.

805

00:47:28,480 --> 00:47:31,680

But this story is bigger than the crew of just one plane.

806

00:47:32,320 --> 00:47:35,440

It is estimated that more than 18,000 souls

807

00:47:35,440 --> 00:47:38,240

were lost in training accidents during World War II.

808

00:47:39,040 --> 00:47:40,720

Because they never saw combat,

809

00:47:40,720 --> 00:47:43,120

they are not officially considered MIAs.

810

00:47:43,680 --> 00:47:46,320

And an effort to find them is long overdue.

811

00:47:46,320 --> 00:47:50,480

It is my hope that more searches will be carried out

812

00:47:50,480 --> 00:47:53,680

so that the soldiers who gave their lives for this country

813

00:47:53,680 --> 00:48:00,800

will no longer be left behind.